The public health system is made up of governmental, non-governmental and community agencies that operate at a local, provincial and federal level. In Ontario, 35 boards of health are responsible for the delivery of mandated public health programs and services.

Two provincial ministries are responsible for different public health programs and services under the Ontario Public Health Standards and serve as key partners for boards of health. The ministries’ responsibilities are as follows:

**Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC):** Infectious Diseases Prevention and Control, Environmental Health and Emergency Preparedness, Chronic Diseases and Injury Prevention, Substance Misuse Prevention and Family Health.

**Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services (MCCSS):** Healthy Babies Healthy Children.

Another key provincial partner Public Health Ontario, provides scientific and technical support for public health programs and services in order to protect and promote the health of Ontarians and reduce inequities in health.

**Funding**

The majority of mandated public health programs (as follows) have provincial cost sharing of up to 75 per cent.

- Health Assessment and Surveillance
- Chronic Diseases and Injuries
- Family Health
- Infectious Diseases
- Environmental Health
- Emergency Preparedness

Currently, the Province funds 100 per cent of the following programs:

- Healthy Babies Healthy Children
- Infectious Diseases Control
- Needle Exchange
- Healthy Smiles Ontario
- Smoke Free Ontario
- Enhanced Food Safety and Enhanced Water Safety Initiatives
- Public Health Nurses Initiatives

The provincial government also funds vaccines for immunization programs and drugs for use in the treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, tuberculosis and leprosy.
Boards of health are established in one of three ways:

- **Autonomous**, and established under section 49 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA) (e.g. the Eastern Ontario Health Unit)
- **Regional Municipality** (e.g. Regional Municipality of York Act)
- **By city-specific Acts** (e.g. City of Toronto Act)

There are five different kinds of organizational governance models for boards of health, which are established in one of the above three ways and described in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Established by</th>
<th>Governance model</th>
<th>Representation</th>
<th>Citizen representative</th>
<th>Provincial appointees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HPPA</td>
<td>Autonomous (23) (e.g. Middlesex-London Health Unit)</td>
<td>Multi-municipal; distinct from municipal organization</td>
<td>Permitted</td>
<td>Permitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPPA</td>
<td>Autonomous/integrated (2) (e.g. Huron County Health Unit)</td>
<td>One municipality only; within municipal structure</td>
<td>Permitted</td>
<td>Permitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Municipalities Acts</td>
<td>Regional (6) (e.g. Region of Waterloo Public Health)</td>
<td>Councils of regional government</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City-specific Acts</td>
<td>Single-Tier (2) (e.g. City of Hamilton – Public Health and Social Services)</td>
<td>Councils of single-tier municipalities</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City-specific Acts</td>
<td>Semi-Autonomous (2) (e.g. Toronto Board of Health)</td>
<td>Single-tier council appoints members to separate board</td>
<td>Permitted</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The **Region of Waterloo Board of Health** is a Regional governance model, where health unit staff operate under the administration of regional government. There are no citizen representatives and no public appointees, however, the members are directly elected within the boundaries of Waterloo Region. The Region of Waterloo Board of Health is one of six Regional boards of health in Ontario.

The Region of Waterloo Board of Health is the Council for the Regional Municipality of Waterloo. Regional Council is composed of 16 elected representatives for the municipalities within the Regional boundaries. Recommendations, reports and information are presented to the Board of Health via the Regional government standing committee process. The Community Services Committee is the Committee that deals with Board of Health matters and is a committee composed of all members of Council. Recommendations are forwarded from this committee directly to Council (the Board of Health) for ratification.

The information contained in this fact sheet originates from the Association of Local Public Health Agencies’ 2018 Orientation Manual for Board of Health Members, and from the Council and Administrative Services Division of Region of Waterloo.

Alternate formats of this document are available upon request.